

Communicating science through puppetry

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Abstract. *Today science has already advanced a lot technologically and now the need of the hour is to connect the hi-tech scientific advancements to a common men. More appropriately, its time to build an abacus to teach rocket science as an example. Because there is no use of such discoveries, inventions and experiments if society is unaware of them.. Science has to be based on term used in civics i.e. ‘democratic’ that means it has to be made by the people, for the people, to the people. It has to come out of the laboratories and dark rooms into a common man’s life so as to make ultimate use of it. For that matter, there are different methods that can be used to explain difficult fundamentals of science to a layman. One such way, which has interested mankind since decades is ‘Puppetry’. It’s a traditional art which can prove to be of real help in delivering knowledge to people of any age .A puppet has the advantage of taking any shape, size or appearance which makes it more interesting. This paper analyses the effectiveness of using puppetry in dissemination of science to the society and the ways to do it. After all, the true value of scientific technology has never been about chips, space ships, cloning or teleporting etc. Rather it is the ability to help people understand what has happen, is happening and may yet happen.*

Keywords: Puppets, Disseminate, Science communication, Superstition, Teaching-learning experience, Human puppets.

1. Introduction

Science is not only a subject but the basis of life and much more. Every happening or development in the world is related to science in some or the other way. Science is so much into us. It’s a part of our daily life. It’s as urgent as Oxygen is for breathing to survive. Other than God and Ghost, there is hardly anything left without a scientific background. In simple words, science is the foundation of life on Earth.

Generally people take science only as a subject to study which can get one a nice highly paying job anywhere in the world. People are still unaware of the fact that science is much more than merely engineering and doctory. The need of the hour is to make them understand science, the true meaning of the word and not just the prospects. Science has to be disseminated to the common men for whom the meaning of science lays only in the three words- Physics, Chemistry and Biology. He has to be necessarily told that science is all about living smart and knowing life in and out. It’s about seeing the light of wisdom and walking towards it and not just following a mob going in wrong direction based on myths or superstition.

2. “Puppetry” – A tool

Puppetry has been used traditionally in India as a famous and cheap medium to disseminate knowledge about various things like myths, legends, superstitions, dreadly diseases, personal hygiene, cultures, government policies and schemes, etc. Puppetry imbibes elements of all art and science forms such as laws, literature, fundas, painting, sculptures, music, dance, drama, etc. Puppetry has been introduced as an aid of science education. In schools, puppetry can prove to be of great help as teaching-learning experience. Puppetry helps in developing imagination, creativity and observation skills.



Figure 1.

3. Puppets are “IN”

Puppets are traditional, deep rooted and “in” which means they are very much in fashion these days in India. Everybody ranging from a kiddo to a grandparent – all are interested in watching puppets interacting over serious and meaningful conversations. They are no more limited only to primary students.

We have examples from Indian television and film industry where puppets have been the basic theme and were way too successful. For a start, the Vodafone “Zoo-Zoo’s” made a history in advertising world by using “Human Puppets”. The Hindi film “Paheli” used puppets and was nominated for **Oscar Film Awards** from India. “Gustakhi Maaf”, a discussion show of puppets resembling political authorities and famous people of India is also a big hit amongst grown-up lot of generation. Other than these there are many more shows and films which have made a mark in knowledge dissemination in India.



Figure 2: International Puppetry Day celebrated on 21st March every year in memory of Russian puppeteer SERGAI ABRATISOV



Figure 3: During a puppet show

4. Qafila Lok Natya Sansthan – for S&T Communication

The meaning of word “Qafila” is a word in **Urdu language** which means a group of people walking all together towards a specific and desired destination. This organization is working towards the field of science communication and has members of all age groups. It understands the urgent need of spreading basic science in society and thus is striving hard to reach as maximum people as possible to enlighten them with true meaning of “science”. They perform puppet shows, workshops, seminars, road-shows, etc. to communicate science through puppetry. “Our main motto is to deliver scientific knowledge along with keeping the traditional art form of puppetry alive”, says Mr. Meraj Alam, Director of the organization.



Figure 4: Newspaper coverage



Figure 5: Celebrations of International puppetry day

5. Conclusion

Though there are several means of science communication present but still puppetry has something different in it. When a puppet is seen in between of hundreds of cartoons, animations, real people or audio aids, it simply gains the attention of everybody. Therefore, it happens to be an excellent medium of science communication. People could easily relate to

puppets and also easily understand them and the scientific knowledge they provide. Puppets are very like humans and the voice over given makes them yet more genuine plus interesting medium of teaching and learning science. They can easily convey basic science to the most rural people who had never even known alphabets since birth. Puppets are successful, in and cosmic.

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